(a) whether Government propose to implement uniform retail prices for drugs (maximum retail price) in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when it will be implemented; and

(d) the reasons for the increase of prices in certain States and the steps taken to control the increased drug prices?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Adviser, Planning Commission was constituted to explore options other than price control to make available life saving drugs at reasonable prices. The Task Force has submitted its report to the Government on the 20th September, 2005. The Task Force has recommended *inter-alia*, that MRP in the case of medicines should be inclusive of all taxes.

The Government in consultation with various stakeholders is examining the recommendations of the Task Force. Based on this a view would be taken regarding the proposal to introduce uniform retail price for drugs.

Subsidy to single super phosphate industry

2617. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the crisis ridden single super phosphate industry has urged the Government to double the subsidy on this fertilizer product;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as against the total annual fertilizer subsidy of Rs. 18000 crores, the subsidy on SSP is only Rs. 165.00 crore; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) Yes Sir, Fertilizer Association of India and some of the SSP manufacturers urged the Government to increase the subsidy on Single Super Phosphate (SSP) as the production of SSP has become

unviable due to sharp increase in the prices of raw materials. Government of India keeping in view the increase in prices of raw materials, decided to increase the *ad-hoc* subsidy on SSP from Rs. 650 per MT to Rs. 975 per MT w.e.f. 1.9.2005. The annual subsidy bill of SSP will increase to Rs. 250 crore approximately, with increase in the *ad-hoc* subsidy rate.

Sugar production

†2618. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment regarding the quantity of sugar production in the country;

(b) if so, the estimated production of sugar in the year 2005-06 and 2006-07 respectively;

(c) the stock of sugar in the country during the month of October, 2005 and the expected stock in the month of October, 2006; and

(d) the quantity of sugar consumption in the country during the month of October, 2005 and the expected consumption during the month of October, 2006?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) As per the reports received from State Governments/ Sugar mills, the sugar production during the current 2005-06 season is estimated at 180 lakh M.Ts. However, while it is too early to estimate, with normal monsoon and increase in area under cultivation, the sugar production for 2006-2007 sugar season, may be good.

(c) As per the Central Excise verified stocks, the closing stock of sugar as on 1st October, 2005 was 62 lakh M.Ts. (Provisional). After taking into the account the closing stock as on 1st October, 2005, the estimated sugar production and the internal consumption, the stock as on October, 2006 is estimated to be around 52-57 lakh M.Ts.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.